

MAINE STATE LEGISLATURE

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No. 1383

H.P. 975

House of Representatives, March 13, 2007

An Act To Enhance Availability of Emergency Telephone Services

Reference to the Committee on Utilities and Energy suggested and ordered printed.

Millicent M. MacFarland
MILLICENT M. MacFARLAND
Clerk

Presented by Representative ADAMS of Portland.
Cosponsored by Senator BARTLETT of Cumberland and
Representatives: BERRY of Bowdoinham, BLISS of South Portland, FLETCHER of Winslow,
HINCK of Portland, RAND of Portland, THIBODEAU of Winterport, Senator: HOBBS of
York.

1 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:**

2 **Sec. 1. 35-A MRSA §7109** is enacted to read:

3 **§7109. Soft dial tone**

4 **1. Definitions.** As used in this section, unless the context otherwise indicates, the
5 following terms have the following meanings.

6 A. "Local exchange carrier" means all wireline incumbent and competitive local
7 exchange carriers authorized to provide service in the State.

8 B. "Soft dial tone" means the continuation of providing emergency 9-1-1 access to
9 customer premises when telephone service has been otherwise disconnected for any
10 reason.

11 **2. Provision of soft dial tone.** A local exchange carrier shall continue to provide
12 emergency 9-1-1 access to a residential customer premises if the local exchange carrier
13 was the last carrier to provide telephone service to that premises. This requirement
14 applies to all telephone lines no longer in service, including, but not limited to, lines that
15 were disconnected due to nonpayment for service and lines that were disconnected at the
16 request of the customer for any reason.

17 **3. Standard of service.** A local exchange carrier shall provide the standard level of
18 enhanced 9-1-1 emergency access when providing soft dial tone.

19 **4. Duration of obligation.** A local exchange carrier shall continue to provide soft
20 dial tone service on every line that it previously served until such time as regular
21 telephone service is restored on that line by that local exchange carrier or another local
22 exchange carrier.

23 **5. Exceptions.** The following are exceptions to this section.

24 A. A local exchange carrier is not obligated to provide soft dial tone if the provision
25 under subsection 2 requires special construction of facilities solely to provide
26 emergency access.

27 B. A local exchange carrier that is unable to provide enhanced 9-1-1 service at a
28 particular location without significant investment for that location shall provide
29 nonenhanced 9-1-1 emergency service if that service can be provided without
30 significant investment.

31 C. Soft dial tone is not required if the premises is vacant and scheduled to be
32 demolished.

33 D. Soft dial tone is not required to be provided to a multiline premises if one or more
34 lines are in service.

35 **6. Notice to customer.** Each local exchange carrier shall inform its customers at
36 least once per year that all primary residential lines are entitled to continuous access to
37 enhanced 9-1-1 emergency service, even after regular service has been terminated. The

1 notice must also be provided as part of any disconnection notice from a local exchange
2 carrier to its customer.

3 **SUMMARY**

4 This bill provides that so-called "soft dial tone" continues to be made available even
5 after regular telephone service is disconnected. The bill also provides consistency
6 between wireline and wireless carriers in that wireless telephones currently preserve
7 access to emergency service even after the disconnection of a service plan.